

Question #5 from committee member Lott:

5) If the National Surgical First Assistant Exam allows Certified Surgical Technologists with 350 cases and 2 years of surgical first assisting experience to sit for the exam. Why was there a group at the first meeting stating that a surgical technologist was breaking the law if he/she was currently performing the duties of a surgical first assistant?

Pathway to CSFA

There are two eligibility pathways to become a surgical first assistant and sit for the certification exam given by NBSTSA.

One is to be a graduate of a CAAHEP accredited surgical assisting program and the other is by Experience Training method.

Most of the CSFA's in Nebraska used the pathway via the experience training method that is offered through NBSTSA. This is still a viable option for CST's wishing to become a CSFA in other states but not in Nebraska.

First requirement is that it needs to be established you are a NBSTSA certified CST with at least two current years of experience. Second step is to find a facility that is willing to sponsor first assisting experience training. The hospital I was working at sponsored me along with one of the general surgeons.

A CSFA Pre-Authorization Form is signed by the Director of Surgery for the sponsoring facility and the CST will need to show evidence of malpractice coverage. Once pre-authorization is granted by the NBSTSA you will need to complete all cases that are required. This must be done within two years from the date pre-authorization is granted. You will need a case log documenting a total of **200 clinical cases in the surgical first assistant role**. Of these 200 cases, it is broken down into 75 General cases, 75 specialty cases and 50 additional cases in any other specialty. This gives the student an expanded knowledge of first assisting in a variety of cases. When case requirements are completed an Experience Verification Form is filled out by the Director of Surgery. This form will correspond to the cases on your log which demonstrates operative case experience. Candidates must submit their completed applications and all case log documents to the NBSTSA within 6 months of completion of the required cases. Case Logs and Experience Verification Forms are good for two years from the date they are received.

This last statement is important to Nebraska because there were several CST's that were very close to completing these requirements but were unable to because of Howard Paul. Since they were not able to finish within the allotted time frame of two years, they may need to start over.

This Experience Training Method is now closed in Nebraska due to the cease and desist order related to Howard Paul law.

CSFA Examination Eligibility (obtained from

<http://nbtsa.org/examinations-csfa.html>)

- [Eligibility & Fees](#)
- [CSFA Examination Preparation & Content Outline](#)
- [CSFA Examination Study Evaluation](#)
- [Reference Materials](#)
- [How to Apply](#)
- [CSFA Practice Examination](#)
- [Examination Development – CSFA Examination](#)

Eligibility & Fees

Establishing Eligibility to Test

The National Board of Surgical Technology and Surgical Assisting (NBSTSA) retains the sole authority to establish eligibility requirements and make all final decisions regarding eligibility.

Before testing, individuals must first establish eligibility by submitting the appropriate examination application form along with the correct fees. NBSTSA does not refund processing fees for ineligible candidates.

Once approved, NBSTSA provides candidates with an Authorization to Test number (ATT), and both the phone number and web address to contact the testing agency to schedule the test.

NBSTSA accepts all properly completed applications from qualified applicants regardless of the applicant's age, sex, race, religion, marital status, disability or national origin.

For a list of Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP) approved surgical assisting programs go to www.caahep.org or call [727-210-2350](tel:727-210-2350).

Surgical First Assistant Eligibility Options:

Option 1

If you are . . .

Then you need the following documentation:

A current or previously certified CSFA.

CSFA Renewal Application with your current or previous certification number written in.

[Click here for the online CSFA Renewal Application.](#)
[Click here for the CSFA Renewal Application](#)

Option 2

If you are . . .

Then you need the following documentation:

A graduate of a surgical first assisting program which was CAAHEP (www.caahep.org) accredited during your enrollment. The website only lists currently accredited programs. Call us at [800-707-0057](tel:800-707-0057) to find out about previously accredited programs or programs currently undergoing the process to become accredited.

ONE of the following: notarized letter (on institutional letterhead) from the Program Director which states your name, date of graduation and type of degree awarded, copy of graduation certificate, or transcript. Transcripts do not have to be official; however, NBSTSA reserves the right to request an official transcript.

[Click here for the online CSFA Examination Application.](#)
[Click here for the CSFA Application.](#)

Option 3

If you are . . .

Then you need the following documentation:

An NBSTSA certified CST with a facility willing to sponsor surgical first assistant experience training as defined by the [Case Experience Requirements \(CST with Currency\)](#).

A CSFA Pre-Authorization Form signed by the Director of Surgery for each sponsoring facility and evidence of malpractice coverage. Once pre-authorization is granted and you complete all cases (must be done within two years from the date pre-authorization is granted), you will need a case log documenting a total of **200 clinical cases in the surgical first assistant role*** and one Experience Verification Form for each sponsoring facility (filled out by the Director of Surgery) that corresponds to the cases on your log and demonstrates operative case experience as defined by the [Case Experience Requirements](#). Case logs should be typed and include your name, the date of the procedure, the type of procedure and your role on the cases. The cases in your log should be grouped by specialty. A writeable PDF case log is included in the link below. Candidates must submit their completed applications and all documents to the NBSTSA within 6 months of completion of the required cases. Case Logs and Experience Verification Forms are good for two years from the date they are received. If your Case Logs and Experience Verification Forms have expired, please contact the NBSTSA

office at 800-707-0057 for further instructions.

[Click here for All Online Forms for CST with Currency Candidates.](#)
[Click here for All Forms for CST with Currency Candidates.](#)

***Please note, rush processing not available on this option.**

Case Experience Requirement for the CSFA Examination:

1. 200 documented surgical procedures in the role of the surgical first assistant:

- 75 in general surgery
- 75 in one specific specialty area
- 50 distributed in any additional specialty areas

2. Suggested specialty areas:

- Bariatric Surgery
- Cardiovascular
- ENT (Otorhinolaryngology)
- Eye (Ophthalmology)
- Neurosurgery
- Ob-Gyn
- Oncology
- Oral/Maxillofacial
- Orthopedic
- Pediatrics
- Peripheral Vascular
- Plastic
- Procurement/Transplant
- Robotics
- Thoracic
- Trauma
- Urology

Option 4

If you are . . .

Then you need the following documentation:

A graduate of a military training program in surgical technology, whether it was before, during or after having CAAHEP accreditation, with 200 clinical cases as a surgical first assistant within four years prior to when the application is received.

A copy of your DD214 (must state location of base where program was completed) OR a copy of your graduation certificate from the surgical technology training program OR a smart transcript, a case log documenting a total of **200 clinical cases in the surgical first assistant role*** and one Experience Verification Form for each facility where cases were completed (must be filled out by the Director of Surgery) that corresponds to the cases on your log and demonstrates operative case experience as defined by the [Case Experience Requirements](#). Case logs should be typed and include your name, the date of the procedure, the type of procedure and your role on the case. The cases in your log should be in order by date. A sample case log is included in the link below. Case Logs and Experience Verification Forms are good for two years from the date they are received. If your Case Logs and Experience Verification Forms have expired, please contact the NBSTSA office at 800-707-0057 for further instructions.

[Click here for All Online Forms for Military Trained CSFA Candidates.](#)
[Click here for All Forms for Military Trained CSFA Candidates.](#)

***Please note, rush processing not available on this option.**

Option 5

If you are . . .

A current Certified Surgical Assistant (CSA) through the National Surgical Assistant Association (NSAA) or **Surgical Assistant – Certified (SA-C)** through the American Board of Surgical Assistants (ABSA) who has completed cases as defined by the [Case Experience Requirements \(CSA/SA-C\)](#) within two years prior to when the application is received, and 50 Continuing Education Credits earned within two years prior to when the application is received (must meet the criteria of the "[AST Continuing Education Policies for the CST & CSFA](#)").

Then you need the following documentation:

A copy of your CSA or SA-C certification document, a Reporting Form for Submitting CE Credits (CSA or SA-C Candidates only), a case log documenting a total of **200 clinical cases in the surgical first assistant role*** and one Experience Verification Form for each facility where cases were completed (must be filled out by the Director of Surgery) that corresponds to the cases on your log and demonstrates operative case experience as defined by the [Case Experience Requirements](#). Case logs should be typed and include your name, the date of the procedure, the type of procedure, and your role on the case. The cases in your log should be grouped by specialty. A writeable PDF case log is included in the link below. Case Logs and Experience Verification Forms are good for two years from the date they are received. If your Case Logs and Experience Verification Forms have expired, please contact the NBSTSA office at 800-707-0057 for further instructions.

[Click here for All Online Forms for CSA or SA-C Candidates.](#)

[Click here for All Forms for CSA or SA-C Candidates](#)

***Please note, rush processing not available on this option.**

***Items in red are changes to last year's policies. All pathways now require 200 clinical cases. If your Pre-Authorization Form was received by NBSTSA in 2014, you will only need to comply with the 2014 rules.**

To have 2014 forms mailed to you, please contact the office at [800-707-0057](tel:800-707-0057).

From: Meyer, Diana [<mailto:Diana.Meyer@nebraska.gov>]
Sent: Tuesday, April 22, 2014 3:06 PM
To: Linda Shoemaker; Jason Petik
Subject: Use of Certified Surgical Tech First Assist in Nebraska
Importance: High

Linda/Jason – Per the meeting with Helen Meeks, Matt Gelvin and Becki Wisell today (4/22/2014) regarding the utilization of Certified Surgical Tech First Assistant personnel in Nebraska:

If a facility in Nebraska would utilize a Certified Surgical Tech First Assist (CSTFA) to perform the duties as delineated on the Sidney Regional Center, Policy Description: Utilization of Certified Surgical Technician First Assistant, Approved date 12/3/2013, Reference No. OR.CSTFA.011; the facility would be in violation of Federal Regulation § 485.639 Condition of Participation: Surgical Services for Critical Access Hospitals which states that 'If a CAH provides surgical services, surgical procedures must be performed in a safe manner by qualified practitioners who have been granted clinical privileges by the governing body, or responsible individual, of the CAH in accordance with the designation requirements under paragraph (a) of this section'. This regulation further clarifies that 'In accordance with acceptable standards of practice includes maintaining compliance with applicable Federal and State laws, regulations and guidelines governing surgical services or surgical service locations...' and would also be in violation of State Licensure Regulations 175 NAC 9-006.03A1 Staff Credentials: 'Each hospital must verify the current active licensure, certification or other credentials in accordance with applicable state law, prior to staff assuming job responsibilities....'.

There are similar regulatory requirements for Acute Care Hospitals which can be found at §482.51 Condition of Participation: Surgical Services for Acute Care Hospitals.

If a person with this training would wish to become regulated as a health professional in the State of Nebraska, they would need to undergo a credentialing review process as delineated in the Nebraska Regulation of Health Professions Act. This act is found in Neb. Rev. Stat § 71-6201 to 71-6229. You may contact Matt Gelvin who is the Program Manager responsible for carrying out the provisions of that Act at 402-471-6515 and obtain further information from him, if you should desire such information.

Diana Meyer, RN BSN – Program Manager

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